

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments, the following remarks and the Request for Continued Examination filed concurrently herewith.

Figs. 15 and 16 are amended to indicate they are directed to related art.

The specification is amended as required in the Final Rejection. Also, various spelling and grammatical corrections have been made, as requested in the Final Rejection.

The Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 11 and 13 are directed to allowable subject matter.

Claims 1 and 18 are replaced by new independent claims 21 and 22 which highlight patentable aspects of this invention. The dependent claims are amended to be consistent with the new independent claims 21 and 22. Support for these amendments is provided for example in Fig. 3 and paragraphs [0059]-[0062] of the published application. (It should be noted that references herein to the specification and drawings are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention to any particular aspect of the referenced embodiments.) (It should be further noted that two erroneous Notices have issued in this application; the above dependent claim amendments are proper in that they are made by (1) strike-through, or (2) double brackets if five or fewer consecutive characters are deleted or if strike-through cannot be easily perceived.)

Claims 1-3, 6-10, 12, 14-16 and 18-20 were rejected, under 35 USC §102(c), as being anticipated by Asano (US 2003/0076830). Claim 17 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Asano (US 2003/0076830) in view of Belknap (US 6,763,377). To the extent that

these rejections may be applied to the new and amended claims presented herein, the Applicants respectfully traverse as follows.

The present invention is directed to solving the problem of prior art systems wherein a terminal device, which is part of a wide area network, may desire to access a server connected to a LAN port of a relay device 102 (see related art Figs. 15 and 16) equipped with plural LAN ports but is impeded from doing so because it does not know which port number is assigned to which terminal on the LAN.

In particular, the present invention (see new claim 21) provides a server apparatus which is configured to be connected to one of the LAN ports of a relay apparatus which has a WAN address, plural LAN ports and a port forwarding feature. The server apparatus has a capability of enabling access from a terminal device on the WAN to another server on the LAN. The server apparatus includes a port management controller which receives a predetermined port number or another port number from the relay device and registers the received port number. The predetermined port number corresponds to a representative server which enables the server apparatus to acquire the WAN address of the relay device and port number information of the at least one other server and is then able to manage the port number information on the at least one other server. That is, when the port management controller receives the predetermined port number as the received port number, the port management controller acquires the WAN address of the relay device and port number information related to the at least one other server, and, in response to an access from a terminal device in the WAN, provides the terminal device with the WAN address of the relay device and the port number information related to the at least one other server.

Asano merely discloses a router 30 having a network address translation (NAT) function. Router 30 has ports #1, #2, and #3, which are respectively connected to hubs 11 and 13 and ISP 15. When router 30 receives from one of personal computers 12-1 to 12-3, 14-1 to 14-3 a request for access to one of personal computers 17 and 18 connected to the Internet 16, router 30 assigns a global IP address to the one of the personal computers 12-1 to 12-3, 14-1 to 14-3 by using the NAT function, and accesses the one of the personal computers 17 and 18 based on the global IP address. The system employs a reference table 42a which stores data of at least one IP address and at least one TCP or UDP port number before translation by the NAT function and at least one IP address and at least one TCP or UDP port number after the translation by the NAT function.

The Applicants respectfully note that the instant claimed invention is directed to a server apparatus in which, when the port management controller receives the predetermined port number as the received port number, the port management controller acquires the WAN address of the relay device and port number information related to the at least one other server, and, in response to an access from a terminal device in the WAN, provides the terminal device with the WAN address of the relay device and the port number information related to the at least one other server. In contrast, in Asano, when there is an access from an external terminal device in the WAN, router 30 does not function to provide the external device with port number information related to personal computers 12-1 to 12-3.

Belknap is not cited for anything related to the above-noted subject matter of Applicants' pending claims.

Accordingly, it is submitted that even if the teachings of Asano and Belknap were

combined, the result still would lack the above-noted subject matter of Applicants' claims, and thus, the instant claims are not rendered obvious by these references.

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: August 13, 2010
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